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IN-PLANT NUTRITION EDUCATION

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by

H. F. Kilander, Ph.D.  
Industrial Feeding Specialist  
Northeast Region

- I. THE OBJECTIVE. To raise the nutritional level of the industrial workers through an improvement in their eating habits.
- II. FACTORS INFLUENCING FOOD HABITS AND FOOD SELECTIONS.
  1. Availability of food. By making the desirable foods available and the less desirable ones not available or less abundant.
  2. Prices. The economic factor is an important influence in determining where a person eats, whether he will bring his own lunch, and in a given eating place, what food choices he will make. Differential prices or subsidies on the more nutritious and abundant foods such as a special plate lunch or milk will increase such food sales.
  3. Appeal. Through the appearance, taste, texture and display of food, individuals can be influenced favorably toward the desirable foods or toward eating in a particular place.
  4. Precept and example. People are knowingly or unknowingly influenced by the food likes and habits of others whom they observe. To the extent that these are desirable likes and habits, will others be influenced favorably.
  5. Education. Influencing the workers' food habits through an informational program is the most effective and permanent procedure. It has the further advantage of being a favorable factor in the selection of food at home and in public eating places outside of the industrial plant. It, consequently, has a carry-over value to the rest of the family. The disadvantage with the educational procedure is that it is slower in its application than the other three influences cited. It is also more difficult to reach all or most of the workers in a given plant by an educational program.

This paper will consider "Education" (5), as it relates to the above mentioned objective. The educational program will, if wisely planned, also take into account the factors of food availability, food prices, food appeal and precept.

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### III. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH A PROGRAM SHOULD BE BASED

1. That a majority of people do not eat wisely.
2. That a majority of people do not know enough about foods and nutrition to choose a balanced meal - even when the desirable foods are available.
3. That the industrial worker in most instances does not have time to attend the regular type of formal nutrition classes.
4. That an educational program can best be geared to the actual feeding of workers through the cafeteria (or other food service), where it exists, or to the lunch box where that is the main source of lunches, or to the meals eaten at home in the case of wives of workers and homemakers employed in industry.
5. That all industrial plants can benefit from a nutrition education program regardless of whether they have in-plant feeding.

### IV. FOR WHOM SHOULD AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BE PLANNED

1. The Workers. The main emphasis should be given to this group. The program should include both men and women.
2. Wives of workers. Since the worker eats most meals at home, it is important that the wives and other homemakers be included in the educational program. Where lunches are brought from home, there is a convenient approach.
3. Management. The president, plant superintendent, personnel director and the medical department all need to be informed on the subject of nutrition as applied to the industrial worker in order to understand and accept a satisfactory program.
4. Food Operator. It is very important that the food operator receive information and instructions on balanced menus, food preparatory procedures, food conservation and food alternates. In most plants the food operator will have something to do with the educational program in the cafeteria and, therefore, needs to understand and be receptive to such a program.
5. Supervisors and Foremen. This group is in a strategic position to sense needs and inadequacies in the eating habits of their employees. The Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation gave their 5,000 foremen a two-hour program on the subject in June 1943. It was tied in with the subject of heat in relation to diet.

# V. TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

## 1. The use of informational materials such as

- a. Posters: The Basic 7 Food Groups, Walt Disney Posters, etc.
- b. Leaflets: 99 Ways to Share the Meat, and current literature as made available by the government and other agencies.
- c. Charts and Graphs showing trends in food consumption such as milk week by week in the plant.
- d. Exhibits made up of (a), (b) and (c).
- e. Movies and slide films. Available from the War Food Administration, State and local Health Departments, etc.
- f. Articles in the plant and union publications on general nutrition as well as on topics tied in with the local feeding program.

## 2. Talks on special topics pertaining to food and nutrition. These can be given at lunch periods to large groups of workers, to groups by departments, to foremen, etc. The public address system is available in some plants.

## 3. Classes and demonstrations

- a. Within the plant. On company time: Industries have a precedence for this in regards to their safety education program.

On worker's time: A few workers might stay over at the end of the day shift for a class. Workers on the swing shift might arrive an hour earlier. A further precedence for this is in the Nursing Classes of the Red Cross.

- b. Outside the plant. Under the sponsorship of management, classes have been organized in many places for workers and their wives. The Westinghouse program of Health for Victory Clubs is an illustration. Public Service Gas and Electric Company in New Jersey has promoted several such programs comprising 4-5 sessions.

The community, through local nutrition committee, can sponsor classes which include labor,

The plant's union can sponsor similar programs at its own meetings.

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4. Consultation Centers

- a. In the plant cafeteria: In the Westinghouse plant, Bloomfield, N. J., the Red Cross, Public Service and the Cafeteria Manager jointly planned a program of this type. Two Red Cross nutritionists sat at a table during the lunch hours of both the day and swing shifts for three days. Workers brought their lunches to them for rating. A certificate with a grade was given to each one. Workers were given advice and materials pertinent to their own and their families needs.
- b. In the Medical Department: The Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y., handled 5,000 consultations in their medical department on nutrition and food problems in 1943. The service was available not only to those who were ill, but to all. Both men and women make use of the service.

5. Contests: Contests can be sponsored on:

- a. Lunch box menus
- b. Lunch box selections
- c. Lunch tray selections
- d. Slogans and posters
- e. Recipes

6. Analysis of worker's diet.

The diets of a limited number of employees can be analyzed to determine their relative adequacies. Suggestions then can be given for their improvement. The diets of other members of the worker's family might be included where time permits.

7. Suggestions from food personnel.

When the worker is passing through the cafeteria line, the food personnel behind the counter can tactfully suggest nutritious dishes and desirable combinations for a meal. The food personnel at several plants are doing this with satisfactory results.

## VI. RESPONSIBILITY FOR AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The program may be assigned to any one of the following departments or individuals, the choice depending upon the situation in the particular plant. Experience has shown that some one person must be responsible for the overall educational program if it is to be coordinated and effective. The actual work may be done by several individuals under some one person's direction.

1. Medical Department. The ideal would be for this department to accept responsibility for the nutrition education. This would give prestige to the program.

An industrial nurse can be very effective where given the right to act.

2. Personnel Department. This department has direct contact with employee groups and is in a good position to work directly with them on the program.
3. Industrial Relations Department. The same applies here as for the Personnel Department.
4. Dietitian. The dietitian is the logical person in most instances to direct the educational program in those plants which have such a person on the staff.
5. Food Manager. In many plants, the food operator is assigned the educational program. If this person is not a dietitian, the educational program will most likely have to be limited and mainly include the use of posters and distribution of leaflets.
6. Labor-Management Committees. Many plants have such committees set up at the request of WPB. Some of these may have a sub-committee on Health and Welfare which committee might logically include food and nutrition as one of its activities. Such committees can often be of real help in obtaining worker acceptance of an educational program. Some one person would still have to be given the responsibility.
7. The Local Union. The union can be of real assistance in cooperation with any of the above departments. In the absence of any planned program within the plant, the union can carry on its own program with its membership at its own meetings. Such programs are especially needed in the AFL, UMW, and Railroad Brotherhood since the nature of their work does not as readily lend itself to in-plant educational programs. The CIO unions are better situated for in-plant programs.

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## VII. OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE ON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The following agencies, organizations and committees have developed nutrition education programs adaptable to the types of programs already suggested here. They can be of assistance through supplying educational materials, films, speakers and conducting consultation services and classes. The particular agency to help a given plant would vary with the given community.

1. Local and State Nutrition Committees and Industrial Nutrition Committees
2. Utilities. Westinghouse through its Health for Victory Club and Public Service Gas and Electric Company of New Jersey have given courses to thousands of workers.
3. American Red Cross. The Chapters in Bloomfield and Newark, New Jersey have supplied consultation services in plants as described under V-4-a.
4. Dairy League. In Philadelphia, the Dairy League supplies posters, leaflets, movies and plant visitations.
5. Health Departments. In Newark, N. J., the local health department, through its industrial nurses, advises on educational programs.
6. Miscellaneous. Servel Inc. of Evansville, Indiana supplies educational material. In various communities the local Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association has been helpful.

## VIII. A PROGRAM FOR INDUSTRIAL FOOD OPERATORS

1. Through formal meetings at which time industrial feeding is discussed with them. Such meetings might be sponsored by the War Food Administration, by the Inter-Agency Committees on Food for Workers, or by the operators' own associations such as Stewards' and Restaurant Associations.
2. Through their own official publications much can be accomplished in the way of educating this group.
3. Through Inter-Plant visitations as carried out by the Food Operators' Section of the Essex County Industrial Nutrition Committee (N.J.). This group visits one plant a month on invitation from a local plant food operator. The group studies the local program and then through an informal discussion led by several food operators, appraises the program. This procedure is of mutual assistance to the local food manager and to those making the visit. From 10 to 25 individuals regularly attend these meetings.



## IX. CONTENT AND TOPICS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

1. Where time permits, such as in regular nutrition classes, the whole subject of nutrition needs to be presented.
2. However, in any limited program the emphasis is best placed on or around a specific topic of direct concern or interest to the workers. One topic might be considered at a time.

The following topics are recommended:

- a. The worker's lunch
- b. An adequate breakfast
- c. How to pack a lunch
- d. Food for women
- e. Food for the heavy worker
- f. Food for the office worker
- g. Meat alternates
- h. The Basic 7 Food Groups
- i. Rationing: Low-Point-No-Point foods
- j. Milk
- k. Between-meal feeding suggestions
- l. Food shortages and alternates
- m. Food conservation
- n. Victory gardening
- o. Canning

